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Michaud, Michael oral history interview

Jeremy Robitaille

Interview with Michael Michaud by Jeremy Robitaille

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee
Michaud, Michael

Interviewer
Robitaille, Jeremy

Date
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Place
Augusta, Maine

ID Number
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Biographical Note

Michael H. Michaud was born January 15, 1955 to James Michaud, Sr. and Geneva (Morrow) Michaud. He grew up in Medway and later moved to East Millinocket, Maine. After graduating from high school, he began working at the Great Northern Paper Company mill in Millinocket and became vice president of the local paper workers' union. Mike was elected to the Maine House of Representatives in 1980 and to the Maine Senate in 1994, becoming its president in 2000. He has been involved in legislation concerning education, health care, unions and environmental protection, among other issues. He was elected a U.S. Congressman from Maine's Second District and sworn in January 2003.

Scope and Content Note

Interview includes discussions of: environmental protection; Democratic Party in Maine; Maine Legislature (1975 to 2001); highways and roads; paper mills and unions; Great Northern Paper Company; education funding; the Maine University system; and health care.

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Transcript

Jeremy Robitaille: We are here at the State House on July 10, 2001 at approximately 10:15 AM, and we're here with Senator Michael Michaud, and interviewing is Jeremy Robitaille. All right, Mr. Michaud, to start could you please state your full name and spell it?

Mike Michaud: Michael H. Michaud, M-I-C-H-A-U-D.

JR: And when and where were you born and raised?

MM: I was born January 18th, 1955 in the Millinocket Hospital, and raised in the Katahdin region, lived in the town of Medway and currently reside in East Millinocket.

JR: Okay. And how long did you live in Medway?

MM: I lived in Medway for approximately twenty-four years.

JR: Okay, so the best part of your life was in Medway?

MM: Yes.

JR: Okay, and what were your parents' names, what are your parents' names?

MM: My father is James Michaud, Senior, my mother is Geneva Michaud. Everyone calls her Gene. Her maiden name is Morrow.

JR: How do you spell it?

MM: M-O-R-R-O-W.

JR: And where were they from originally? Were they from Medway or-?

MM: No. Dad grew up in East Millinocket, and Mom grew up in Ashland, and she went to, she moved from Ashland to Millinocket.

JR: And were they at all involved in the community, politically or otherwise?

MM: Nope, they were pretty much, Dad worked in the mill for forty some odd years, and Mom stayed home to raise six kids.

JR: What were their views, like ethnically, socially, politically, what would you say?

MM: They're both registered Democrats, both French, and they really never got involved in politics much or weren't much interested in it until I got involved.

JR: Okay. And what can you tell me about your community in Medway growing up. For example what were, what was like the ethnic and political atmosphere of the town, while growing up?

MM: It's pretty much a mill working town, pretty much everyone in the town of Medway worked at Great Northern Paper Company, which provided a good living for everyone who worked there at the time. And it's, you know, a mixture of Italian, French, Irish.

JR: And did you have a sense of any sort of ethnic friction in your town growing up, between like French and Irish and Italian?

MM: No, no, there was never any appearance or, as far as I knew there wasn't any ethnic, you know, problem, race problems or anything like that.

JR: Okay. And did you have a sense of, like for example, did your father belong to a union at the mill?

MM: Yes.

JR: And what sort of sense did you have of that growing up, like just him going off to union meetings or like what sort of a, like what was your impressions of I guess maybe the labor movement involved with the people in your town and the mill?

MM: Yeah, it was very, actually I can't remember Dad ever going to union meetings. He might have when we were younger and growing up. Pretty much Dad went to work early in the morning, he was a mechanic in the mill, and he'd come home after work and, you know, to be with the family and that's pretty much it. They weren't ones to go out and do a lot of socializing. You know, you worked hard in the mill so you could provide and build a family-.

JR: And when you were growing up did you really have any idea as far as if there were major players in the unions that really tried to organize them a lot, or was that just kind of -?

MM: No, he really never talked about the union at all. He'd come home (*unintelligible phrase*) mention every now and then that they'd had a rough day at the mill. But as far as, you know, the importance of the union, what the union had done, he really would never talk. He pretty much kept things to himself as far as there what happened at the mill, other than now and then to have had a rough day.

JR: Okay. Where did you attend school?

MM: I attended school at Medway Elementary School, and from ninth grade on the high school, (*name*) High School.

JR: And what were your interests there, like extracurricular or academic otherwise?

MM: Actually, I liked the, played on the chess team, was involved with the yearbook, there was plenty (*unintelligible phrase*) in the yearbook, as well as manager of the basketball team, you know, I kept statistics for basketball. Since I liked, you know, liked watching basketball.

JR: And were you at all involved in the community, politically or otherwise, like when you were in high school, or (*unintelligible phrase*)?

MM: No, no, pretty much during growing up, during high school, other than you know probably going to the plays, you know, at the high school, never really got involved in the local community. You know, when I wasn't at the basketball game, or, you know, visiting friends, helping them work on the farm, I pretty much just stayed at the house working in the garden, doing work around the house. And did a lot of fishing (*unintelligible phrase*) when I was younger, with my brothers and sisters.

JR: And so after high school did you go straight to the, to the Great Northern Paper Company, or did you -?

MM: Yes, actually I was, you know, after high school, was thinking of going on to college, but when I graduated in '73, actually I think that was the last year, people from the mill actually came up to the senior class to give out applications to hire, you know, employees for the mill. And so I worked there at the mill during that summer and we made pretty good wages back then, and I stayed there at the mill.

JR: And what positions did you hold with the company?

MM: Well, when I first started I think I worked maybe one or two weeks in the grinding room, which is actually one of the toughest areas in mills back then, as far as working goes. And then I went to work in the paper room, as a paper maker for pretty much about seven years in the paper room; really liked the work actually. My uncle, who was really involved in the union, been a union officer for years, actually that's where he worked, in the paper room.

JR: And what was his name?

MM: Bill McCloud. What I might add was my uncle was a Republican. But he voted Democrat.

JR: Very good. Were you yourself involved with the unions when you were there?

MM: Yes, yes, actually I became involved with the unions, particularly you know, because my uncle being a union officer, and I was vice president of the paper workers union, Local 152. And [I had] been involved with the unions for a number of years since I went to work in the mill.

JR: Okay. And, in your time as vice president of your union, what sort of issues and events really came up, really stand out in your mind as like, you know, having to deal with the union like in those first years at the paper company?

MM: Well actually before I became vice president of the union, I was, Great Northern actually had a strike, first strike I think that they'd ever had back then, the late seventies. And one of the things that actually I did at that time was actually did a lot of the paper work for the strike, and then actually worked on trying to get some trade assistance for, and strike breaking benefits, for the union members. And then as far as, you know, when I became vice president of the union, it was an interesting job, working with different members of the local and trying to help them if they got laid off or scheduling grievance meetings and what have you.

JR: Okay. And with your time working at the mill, do you have a sense of how mill workers viewed like Ed Muskie and his environmental protection laws? Like was there any sense of like an antagonism with the legislation at all that you can think of or, that-?

MM: No, clearly back during that time, as long as people up in that area could hunt and fish and, you know, were not restricted as far as their outdoor activities, they really didn't get too involved at the national level. There were clearly some union members who were more active politically than others. And, Bud Millet who was president of the paper workers for quite some time, he was a Democrat and actually very active in the political arena, more so than some of the other presidents of the local up there. So there wasn't that, you know, they were pleased, I'd say, by and large that work was being done to clean up the environment, as long as it did not jeopardize the jobs at the mill. That was their main concern is, you know, they wanted a clean environment to live and be part of, but they did not want that to go to such a degree that it would cause the mill to shut down or a loss of employment.

JR: Right. And what sense did you get of Muskie's, you may have already answered this, but just kind of his relation not only to the mill and the people but also just like your area, like the northern Penobscot towns, like what sense did you have of how he was serving your area?

MM: I think, you know, the sense that I had growing up and working in the mill, that he did a very good job. I mean, you, you know, clearly environmental protection was a key component that Senator Muskie was really involved in and done a lot of work on. But those protections was not at the detriment of jobs and economic development, so I think it's a, it was a good correlation as far as what he was doing, as far as you know, representing the people of the state of Maine. He had a good balance.

JR: Okay. Before your election to the state legislature, were you at all involved politically outside of your involvement with the unions, run for any local offices?

MM: No, first office was when I ran for the State House of Representatives.

JR: Great, okay. And what made you decide to run?

MM: Actually it was, what made me decide to run for that office was when the place where I grew up, in the town of Medway, the Penobscot River, you can see it across the road from where I grew up, and there's actually a little cove in the river and practically walk across it because of the sludge and the pollution from the mill. So one of the things I decided to do was rather than sit back and complain about the pollution, I decided to run for public office. And, so I ran and, although it was, you ran against, had a primary opponent it was, you know, wasn't sure whether I'd make it or not. 'Cause I'd never been involved in local politics and my primary opponent was involved in politics for a number of years in the town of Millinocket, so I wasn't quite sure whether I'd make it or not. But I, you know, ran, ran real hard and won and actually that was the committee I requested to be on, was the energy and natural resources committee in the legislature, and at that time Speaker Martin was the speaker, and he appointed me to the environment committee.

JR: So you were really inspired kind of in the vein of Ed Muskie in trying to really clean up, like being very environmentally conscious in your motivations for political activity.

MM: Yeah, I mean that's actually what got me started, you know, into politics. And, you know, what's amazing is a lot of people feel that, because at the time I ran for office and the reason, because of the pollution, because I was an employee of the mill at the time, and I know people were amazed at, well, how can you be an employee and still do this to the company. Matter of fact, another issue I got involved in was when Great Northern practically, you know, they had drafted their own plan to, for closing the landfill. They had a landfill, and they weren't even following their own plan. And I contacted the Department of Environmental Protection and talked to them about it, and asked them if they'd go up there and investigate the sludge dump and see what was going on and, you know, try to make corrections. And ironically at the time I had done that, and DEP did go up to look at it, the president of the company was walking past the time clock with, at that time the president of the (*unintelligible phrase*) union, Arthur Owens, and he was complaining to Arthur about this legislator who was on their back about the sludge

dump, and I can remember after, because at the time the president didn't know who I was, I says, well would you like to meet him, they guy said yes, so he says, well why don't you turn around, I'll introduce you to him. You know, so, but yeah, you know, clearly I think the environmental protection is very important, and I think you can have a clean environment at the same time that you can have economic development.

JR: Did you have a sense of like, I guess specifically in like your first term in the legislature, that there were a lot of legislators like you who were really like going in the same vein of environmental consciousness and, like as a motivation to get involved in politics? How was Muskie's influence influencing your generation, the younger Democrats?

MM: I think at the time I got elected I think it was actually a real motivation. Because I can remember talking to Speaker Martin at the time, and actually, you know, at that time the Energy and Natural Resources Committee was one of the prime committees to be on, versus Appropriation Committee. He had more requests for individual legislators to be on the environment committee than he did appropriations. So, I think that says a lot about the timing back then, what the issues were. And I think to some degree still are today.

JR: What other committee, did you just serve in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, or which other committee did you serve on, while in the legislature?

MM: I served on Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and at that time also there was a committee just dealing with election laws. Then the other committees, those were the committees I served on, and appropriations, I served on, during my later term in the house I served on the Appropriations Committee. In the senate, I served on the, my first term in the senate when the Republicans took control, they put me on the Fishes and Wildlife Committee and the Legal and Veteran's Affairs Committee. After that I, when the Democrats took control of the following session, I chaired the Appropriation Committee for two terms.

JR: In your time in the house of representatives, what for you stand out as like the major issues that you had to battle, and also the major influences on you, like fellow legislators and otherwise, like in those sort of, like, probably like your, you know, your time in the house, what was it, fourteen years, right?

MM: Fourteen years, yes. Clearly the big issue was to do a major reclass [reclassification] of all the rivers in the state of Maine, which at that time there wasn't a reclass, I can't remember how long ago before there actually was a reclass, but that was during Governor Brennan days that we finally were able to get a major reclass for all the rivers in the state, which I think was really significant. Plus, we were able to actually pass a real comprehensive package dealing with solid waste landfills, which froze any new landfills into the state of Maine. So the solid waste was another big environmental area. Growth management, growth management, we were able to actually pass a good growth management law at the time. Unfortunately, when we had the budget shortfall during Governor McKernan days, we, the mandates were repealed in the law, and growth management law was, you know, substantially weakened.

But another accomplishment, which some might not think was much of an accomplishment, but

another accomplishment at the time was we were able to finally get a comprehensive forest practices act, which was a first, that was back in the, I believe the late eighties, which was the first one we were able to get anything through a long time. I know former representative Bob McCackrin from Lincoln had continuously put in a forest practices bill but was always, you know, been defeated. And at that time I was the chair of the environment committee and, actually I sponsored both the Audubon Society's forest practices bill as well as Maine Forest Products Council's forest practices bill, and one of the things I did was that I told both groups that we will have a forest practices bill, and I wanted both sides to sit down and try to work something out that clearly made significant, that would help forest practices in the state of Maine, but also did it in a way that was, didn't cause a lot of, or didn't cause job losses. So we were able to actually get both sides to sit down and to work something that both sides actually could agree on, so-.

JR: And to you, who were the most influencing legislators in your time, besides yourself of course.

MM: Clearly Speaker John Martin was a very influential, and still is, during that time frame. As well as, you know, Don Carter, Judy Keeny was very good on the environmental issues, Don Carter clearly was very influential; he was house chair of Appropriations Committee. So, yeah, worked with a lot of good legislators over the years and learned a lot from them.

JR: Right. Give me a sense of your impressions of John Martin as far as, I guess specifically his role in the Democratic Party, and in the legislature, like how has it changed since he's been here, like what has his major influence been?

MM: I think, clearly John was here years before I got to the legislature. I think he made a big difference, particularly in the house of representatives where he banned lobbyists from being inside the chamber during session. And as well as he had strengthened the role of the legislators and actually legislative staff in that years ago, it's my understanding, before I ever came to the legislature, usually the lobbyists were the ones who drafted legislation, actually helped redraft the legislation, and John was very instrumental in having a stronger role for the legislature and having the bills being drafted by legislative employees. You know, still you do have lobbyists who present legislation, or writes legislation to give to legislators to introduce. However, as far as the committee work, it's not the lobbyists who deal with it, it's the legislative employees. And clearly John has done a lot in the environmental area, as well as in the health and human services area. And he's really brought a lot of respect to the legislature and I think it's unfortunate, a few years ago when he had stepped down and the whole term limit deal that has come about, I think will eventually weaken the legislature.

JR: Yeah, just that's, and that seems to be a general consensus in the legislature, and actually probably with the governor, too, that the term limits ultimately will weaken the power of the legislative branch. I mean, right?

MM: Yes, yes, absolutely. And I don't think it necessarily gives all the authority to, you know, to the lobbyists. I think clearly the executive branch I think will benefit by the weakening of the legislative branch.

JR: In your time in the legislature, how I guess would you describe your relationship between the legislative branch and the executive, like say with Brennan and McKernan and King, and how would you compare and contrast those three governors in their relationship with the Maine legislature?

MM: Actually, and how my relationship's been with them?

JR: I'd say both personally, but also just how the legislature in general, like how each governor interacted with the legislature as a whole, but also with yourself.

MM: I think they interacted with the legislature pretty well. It's, clearly I'll start with Governor King since he's the current governor, I think he's done a tremendous job as far as working with the legislature. I think there's always friction between the executive and the legislative branch. They clearly, I think the tendency of an executive branch is clearly, they are the chief executive, they like to have it their way, and I can understand that. And I think when Governor King first became governor; I think to some degree he probably resented the legislature as a co-equal branch. I think as he moved forward in his term as governor, I think he's been able to work with the legislature a lot better.

And I think primarily a lot of that had to do with the people he had around him. Clearly his chief of staff and people that he has dealing with the legislature, Kay Rand, who has been involved with the legislature for a number of years in various different capacities, from Maine Municipal Association to actually an employee of the McKernan administration. So she clearly has a reputation of dealing with the legislature. And she has a lot of working with individual legislators in her different capacities that she's held over the years. Sue Bell, who works with Kay, you know, clearly was a Republican legislator, back in the eighties, and Greg Nadeau was a Democratic legislator as well, and I've served actually with both of those individuals. So clearly they have a knowledge of the legislature, they have a good working relationship with members of the legislature from both political parties, so I think clearly they really understand it and I think it has helped the King administration with the legislature.

Governor McKernan, I think he's done, I don't think his relationship with the legislature has been as good as Governor King's, but I think, not that he was any less of a governor then than Governor King. I think primarily, you know, I always got along very well with Governor McKernan and worked with him on different proposals. I think clearly the staff that he had working with, directly working with the legislature, really didn't have the knowledge base that Governor King's people did, or does, and so it made it I think that little more difficult. Plus, clearly during a part of that time when Governor McKernan was governor, Democrats controlled both chambers of the legislature, so that made a difference. But also, Governor McKernan, you know, was governor, at least the last part of his, you know, term, back in the early nineties, he had to deal with a dramatic change in revenues where they, at that time it was a 3.2 billion dollar biennial budget, there was a shortfall of a billion dollars. So it was real difficult times, and so he had to deal with that shortfall, and clearly that did not make him popular with state employees or other groups, whether it's business communities, educators, because of the school funding issue, or municipal officials. Clearly he had a real tough time in trying to balance the state budget.

Governor Brennan, I only served two years with Governor Brennan, or was it four years, I can't remember now. But clearly Governor Brennan, I did not serve as many years with him being governor as I did Governor King, which will be eight, and McKernan eight. Governor Brennan had a, you know, Democratic controlled legislature. And things are, you know, I had a pretty good working, and I think the legislature had a good relationship with Governor Brennan. I think, you know, there has been tensions, even with a Democratic controlled legislature and a Democratic governor, but it was nothing that really stood out in the public, a lot of it was, you know, behind closed doors, a lot of inner party squabbles. But Governor Brennan, I think, did have the advantage of having Democrats control both bodies and were able to move forward his agenda as well.

But I think overall, all three governors have worked fairly well with the legislature considering the, you know, the constraints and different problems that each one of them might have faced. Clearly, you know, the last eight years under Governor King have been pretty good; the economy's been going very well and clearly when you have a good economy there's less fighting amongst party or, you know, amongst the different parties involved.

JR: Great, thank you. I'm not sure if this is accurate but for the research I did, in 1982 did you become speaker pro tempore?

MM: Yes.

JR: And how did that come about?

MM: Actually one of the things that I learned, actually it was my second year of my first term. The, you know, I've heard Speaker Martin say a lot of times that, you know, if you want to be effective here in the legislature, clearly you've got to learn the rules. And that's one of the things that I started right from the beginning is, I figured I'd better learn the rules and see where that gets me, and clearly it got me to president of the senate. But yeah, that's one of the things, you know, I asked John, Speaker Martin at that time, if I could serve as speaker pro tem. So he put me up there, and of course at first it's really, you know, you could read the rules and try to learn the rules, but it's a lot different reading versus actually up there doing it. Actually, by doing it actually I think you learn a lot more because you're actually practicing what you've read, and you know how to move things along. And so I tried that and actually kind of liked it and, you know, Speaker Martin kept putting me up there, and I know when he actually went to France for a week he put me up there for that full week that he was gone. So I remember actually his staff decided to make another sign to put over his name as far as speaker of the house and put my name over there and actually took a photo to give to John. And when he had called me from France when I was at the rostrum, I suggested that he might want to stay out there two more weeks because things were going very well.

But no, I learned a lot from John, as well as Ed Pert. Ed Pert was the clerk of the house at that time and Ed was very helpful in helping me through the process. And one thing, when you're up there being presiding officer, particularly, well actually all the time you're up there, but particularly when you first try it out, you always have, or I always had Ed Pert, who was there as

clerk of the house, who was able to help me out as far as, you know, any parliamentary procedure or what had to be done.

JR: Were you at all involved in the National Conference of State Legislators?

MM: Yes. Yeah.

JR: Tell me about that one.

MM: Actually I was appointed in, it's been so long that I can remember all the committees, but I was appointed to various committees for NCSL, and they were primarily the environmental committees. And I was vice chair actually of the environmental committee and actually moved up to chair as well. So it was real interesting because it gave me a chance to talk and meet with other legislators throughout the country on some of the issues dealing with environmental concerns. And actually it was very helpful because I can remember back, this is when Senator Mitchell was majority leader as well, there was actually a resolution presented to the National Conference of State Legislators from a actually a fellow Democrat from Connecticut who wanted to change the definition of what was recyclable as it relates to sawdust. And the way that they wanted to change the definition actually would have hurt Lincoln Pulp and Paper, because Lincoln Pulp and Paper does produce a lot of paper products for the federal government and they use sawdust as part of that process, and that's one of the requirements (*unintelligible phrase*), you know, requires a certain percentage being recycled. And by removing that as considered to be recyclable, then that definitely would have hurt Lincoln Pulp and Paper. So we were able to, I was able to defeat that resolution at NCSL and actually ultimately that definitely does help Lincoln Pulp and Paper. And that whole issue was actually, I look at it as a good environmental issue because clearly, you know in northern Maine we have the problem with sawdust piles, and clearly they were taking care of part of the problem at the same time that they were providing good Maine jobs for workers up in the Lincoln area.

JR: Did you get much of a sense of what specific environmental issues affected different parts of the country, because I figure New England is very much rivers because of the mills, but like what, did you have much of a sense of other parts of the country in your involvement with NCSL?

MM: Clearly, out in the mid west was the coal, coal issue clearly was a big concern for that area. And the reasons why, you know, they didn't care so much for the Clean Air Act. That was one thing I learned about at NCSL, as well as actually out in the mid west the whole issue about drought, draining down the rivers and the effect that that would have as far as water supply. So that was the other thing we talked about, as well as oil drilling. I can remember actually, there's was a resolution talking about drilling up in Alaska. And, so learned different problems in different areas of the state that we might not have here, I mean different areas of the country that we might not have here back in the state of Maine.

JR: And, the one thing that really came to mind was that, it seems that sprawl and this kind of land management has really become an issue in Maine recently. I imagine, was that much more of an issue then for different parts of the country, as far as the metropolitan areas?

MM: Actually the sprawl issue actually has been a problem for different parts of the country. I know actually Florida had a concern with sprawl, and other areas of the country actually did have some problems with sprawl. And I know actually a lot of people wanted a copy of Maine's growth management law at that time to look at, you know, their particular area. And I think actually we looked at, I believe was it Oklahoma or Ohio, I can't remember which one, we looked at another state, what they were doing as far as growth management and sprawl area and was able to get some good ideas from them as well.

JR: Right, okay. Now if we could kind of switch gears a little to your time in the Maine senate, that's since '94, right?

MM: Yes.

JR: Okay. And your time in the Maine senate, what have been the issues and the people that have been most influential, I'd say. Like what have been the main issues that you've had to deal with, like the most important to you?

MM: Clearly the big issues, main issues I've been dealing since I've been in the senate, is clearly trying to make up lost ground as far as education funding. During the early nineties when we had that huge budget shortfall, municipalities took a huge hit as far as funding for schools. And one of the things that I've been focused on actually over the last four years, since the revenue stream has been coming in pretty good, is trying to give more monies to the local communities as far as education. As well as not only for programming, but also for school construction and renovations. Clearly there are problems, you know, probably more so in the southern part of the state as far as, you know, needing more space for schools. But that's an issue as well in the northern part and different areas, whether it's having to reconstruct a school building because the infrastructure might have deteriorated, or simply meeting new capacity as far as space. That has been one issue.

The other issue is clearly being able to do these sort of things that are, and do them in a manner that is fiscally responsible. One of the things that, I know the last four years when I was chair of the appropriation committee, that we were able to do is, undo a, was, what happened during the McKernan years was when he pushed out paying off the debt in the retirement system. The four years I was chair of appropriations we were able to, Governor McKernan at that time had pushed out ten years, we were able to haul it back, you know, nine years to try to get it back on its same payment schedule. And by hauling it back nine years, that actually saved, or will save the taxpayers over 4.4 billion dollars, which is substantial savings to the taxpayers. And those are some of the things we've been able to do that really don't get much publicity because it's not as if towns are getting more money or groups or organizations, it's just something that's fiscally responsible.

The other thing actually we've been able to do is put, or help out, the highway fund substantially. Clearly when you look at economic development, road infrastructure, rail infrastructure, are very vital to economic growth, and the debt that the highway fund has been taking on has been much greater than the general fund debt for Vermont. So, one of the things we've been doing

over the last four years is giving a lot more assistance from the general fund to the highway fund, so that they can go out there and do the improvements needed. And by that I mean, for instance, Route 11, which is a road up in northern Maine, two years back actually in, you know, they had to actually shut down businesses because they closed the road and they couldn't get the log trucks across the road because it was posted, so they were shutting down businesses. And one of the things that we did three years ago, four years ago, was actually put about twelve million dollars from the general fund to the highway fund so that it could rebuild that road so they will not have to post it.

So those are some of the things I think that we've been able to do, not only infrastructure as far as roads, but we've been able to put a lot of infrastructure needs in state buildings, which is very important. Clearly, if you look at the state capital, if you could see some of the problems here. Clearly it was costly, but it would have been more costly if we kept going. For instance, on the first floor, rather than have the rebar in the cement, it was barbed wire, that's what they had in there. When they drilled a hole through the Hall of Flags, I can't remember how many tons on that, on the Hall of Flags, they drilled down to see what was in the floor and actually it was sawdust they had mixed in with the cement. So there was a lot of problems, not only at the state capital but at the state office building and other buildings. The other thing that actually we were able to do -

End of Side A, Tape One
Side B, Tape One

JR: Please continue.

MM: Okay, is for higher Ed. We passed A-60 and the voters approved a huge bond package for the technical college system, as well as higher Ed. We have been able to put money into higher Ed, so that it would hopefully keep down the tuition rates so that any student in the state of Maine who wants to further their education, that they'd be able to.

Research and development, the legislature over the past four years have done, made tremendous strides into research and development, which had brought in millions and millions of federal dollars, but I think ultimately will actually have a big effect on economic development in the state. I know medical research money that we've given to the Jackson Lab and other facilities such as that, you know, those jobs that will be produced from that type of assistance are jobs that pay, you know, forty, forty-five thousand dollars a year, with health benefits and what have you. So that's some of the things that we were able to do over the last, you know, six years, primarily because the economy has been going very well, the revenue stream has been coming in. So I think, you know, we've made strides and hopefully will continue, that the economy will stay growing and we will continue to make strides in these areas.

And health care, I mean, clearly the health care issue, we've done a lot of things in health care whether it's a health, the Cub Care program that we passed quite a few years ago, about five years ago, or, more recently, with expanding eligibility for Medicaid and what have you, we've done a lot in the health care issue. One of the things that, you know, people talk about a lot is making sure that we have, people are eligible for health care, but the other important thing, I

think, when you look at the state of Maine is making sure we have access. It doesn't do any good for the state of Maine to have, or a hospital to provide good health care if you have someone who can't get there to the hospital to access that need. And that's some of the things actually we've been working on with the area Agency on Aging to help provide transportation needs for people who need it so that they can get the health care that they need.

JR: Great. Okay, obviously with the deadlock is, partisanship is definitely begun to play somewhat of a role. How, in your opinion, like since you know you've been here since 1980, how is partisanship in the Maine legislature changed, like since, over the course of your time here?

MM: I think it's, well particularly this last, this past year, I don't think it was partisan at all. Whereas, I know when I first was in the senate, when the Republicans took control in 1994, I think it was extremely partisan during that time frame. To a degree that it actually made a difference on who was appointed to what committees. To give you a good example, where I actually served on the Appropriation Committee from the house, going to the senate, actually at that time the minority leader, Mark Lawrence, recommended me to be put back on the Appropriation Committee since I already had the knowledge of the process. The Republicans definitely did not want me on the Appropriation Committee because of the knowledge that I had in that process, so they chose not to put me on, which went against tradition as far as accepting a recommendation of the minority leader. And also, what had happened at that time clearly is, in the house, since we, nothing we can do about it in the senate, but in the house, the speaker of the house, Dan Gwadosky, actually refused to put Gary Reed, who is a former member, Republican member of the Appropriation, refused to put him on the Appropriation Committee as well, so -

JR: He was a Republican?

MM: Yes. So I think it probably was more partisan than what it had, what it definitely has been this time around. Clearly the, with the seventy [to] seventy-one split in the senate, you know, there's no clear majority, neither party had a majority in the senate and it really had forced us to work closer together. Even though we agreed to do it at the beginning of the session, clearly the budget document is the document that if there is any partisan split it would be over the budget document. And actually the senate this time around, you know, the Democrats were not pleased with what came out of the appropriation committee, neither was the Republicans in the senate, so it really forced us to say, well, what are your problems, you know, with the Republicans, and vice versa, and after we had our concerns out on the table we realized we really weren't that far off. So we were able to work out a senate agreement as far as what we thought we can get two thirds vote on in the senate, which caused problems down with our house counterparts at the other end, so it was more of a house-senate deal this time around versus a Republican-Democratic deal.

JR: And is that something new, the house and senate being so at odds with each other?

MM: Yes, yes, yes. Normally it's always, has always been a Republican - Democrat issue, or one party or the other party against the governor. This time around actually is the first time in the twenty years I've been here, and actually the first time I think that anyone can remember, that

it was you know clearly a house-senate deal. We had good, strong bipartisan support in the senate, and same in the house for their particular versions of the budget.

JR: Do you have any thoughts as to what may have influenced that or?

MM: I think what influenced that was clearly when the house finished up with the budget, and I stayed here to listen to the debate in the house, there actually really wasn't that much difference between what actually came out and what we heard, what was originally presented. But the, I think what influenced it was, and we did see some amendments actually that was printed up, that the Democrats had that would force Republicans to vote against, that would make the Republicans look bad, they had amendments that, they tried to make us look bad. So what we decided to do was, well, and we realized that with two members of the Appropriation Committee, one Democrat and one Republican, that clearly they would stick with the committee vote, so clearly any of the amendments that we had to offer would not have gotten on. Likewise, any amendments the Republicans had would not have gotten on. And even if they did get on, when it went back down to the house they would kill them anyway. So we realized that if we were, or wanted anything in the budget in the issues that concerned us on the Democratic side was clearly, they did not, they cut out the cost of living for nursing homes, how they distributed the additional money for schools definitely hurt a lot of the schools in the rural areas. You know, these were some of the issues that really, there's no. They were increasing taxes but they had no relief as far as towns, like revenue sharing. So clearly we knew if we wanted to get any of these things into the budget, we'd have to work out an agreement with the Republican senators. And we were able to, and so it really forced us.

And one of the things I think really forced us, or really bonded us together, was we decided to go into what we call a committee of the whole, which is, it's the first time that I know that we've ever done that, either in the senate or in the house, and the process is a little different in, when we're in session, you know the certain rules and procedures you have to go by, parliamentary, but when you go in as a committee of the whole, it's actually like a caucus and it's, you know, we're not restricted by certain rules and procedure. And we were able to go into a committee of the whole, discuss our concerns with the budget process, and be able to more or less put out there what we would like to see as the senate, as the senate as a whole versus Republican or Democrat. So I think that really helped us as far as working a lot closer together.

The other thing actually I think that helped build that confidence and more or less had taken out the partisan aspect is, is where half the chairs were Republican chairs, half the chairs were Democratic chairs. And one of the things that we've always done in the past, I know since I've been in the senate, we always have a caucus before session start, to look at the calendar, what was coming up, what are some of the issues, and more or less strategize over that. And actually we started it this year as well, you know, the Democrats. And I assume the Republicans did the same thing. One of the things that I offered to President Pro Tem Bennett was, well rather than do it separately, why don't we save time and just have a joint chairs meeting to go over the calendar. So we started that, and it actually went very well. We had the chairs of all the committees in this office before session started, plus the leadership from both sides, and would actually go over the calendar, see where the problems were in the calendar, are there ways that we can do things differently, speed it up. And actually that not only I think helped bond the

senators closer together, but it also had sped up the process. I think the senate, we were in session probably maybe three times at night and that was it. We were pretty much able to finish our work in the morning, before noontime. And it really had sped up the process because if there is a problem as far as referral of a bill or what have you, we were able to work it out before we went into session. So that really sped up the process as far as our timing goes.

And I think that probably actually, you know, caused some problems with the house because, clearly they spent a lot of nights here, debating issues, and when they looked down the hallway and they saw, you know, the completely black down here clearly, you know, I think that probably caused a little friction. But I think it was a lot easier for us, number one, we had fewer members. And the second thing, as I mentioned, we were able to really get our work done in the morning, primarily I think because where we had the caucuses or the chairs meeting beforehand, that really smooths the process a lot.

JR: Okay, great. How does your time as senate president kind of change your perspective of how the senate works? I guess, like if you have an impression of how it's really like, because it seems when you're senate president that you kind of, are you less involved with bills and more involved with more of the procedures, or how would you speak to that?

MM: Yeah, primarily it's more involvement with the process versus individual type bills. Clearly, you know, one of the jobs of the presiding officer is to make sure that the process moves along so that there's no logjams or, and that we're able to finish on time. And a lot of it was process, committee appointments clearly, and not only for legislative committees but also for commissions and what have you that come up daily has taken up quite a bit of time. But as far as the actual policy, you know, I still spent quite a bit of time on that as well. But yeah, I usually do that in working with the senators on those particular committees, so hopefully if they do their work as far as, you know, what the Democrat caucus wants, then that's how the report will come out of that, you know, particular committee. So, but primarily a lot of the time of the presiding officer is dealing with process, not only making sure things get, the bills get through the senate smoothly, but also dealing with personnel issues, as well.

JR: You may have already spoken to this with, when you were talking about your committee as a whole with the senate, but I just kind of wanted to get your perspective on how you see the differences between like the senate and the house of representatives, regarding function, impact, and relations with constituents? If you can speak to that-

MM: Actually I think that, as far as the functioning of the senate, I think it's, in relationship to the house, I think it probably ran, you know, a lot smoother than the house. And primarily I, you know, mentioned a couple of things, you know, clearly we're a smaller body, number one. The second thing is clearly the chairs' meeting we have in the morning, its bipartisan chairs meetings so I think that takes out a lot of the partisan bickering; we're able to move things along. But the other thing actually I think that really helped us out is, when we start at nine o'clock, we start at nine o'clock. It's not 9:30 or quarter of ten, you know, we do start on time and I think that does make a big difference. One of the things that concerned me as a member in the past and the thing I've heard a lot from membership, is the timing. I mean, you know, one thing that they hate is never starting on time because what clearly happens is if we set session at nine o'clock, we

usually don't start until 9:30. Then members are going to say, well, I'll make a couple more phone calls because we never start until 9:30 anyway, so it really encourages members to be non-responsive. So I think, in that manner, I think the senate clearly did a better job as far as managing of the time.

The other thing, though, is I think, and it's clearly with this whole budget process, is it was built from the membership up. It wasn't something that leadership said, "Well it has to be this way and that's it." You know, some of the suggestions, some of the problems that were currently in the budget, was built from the bottom up. I did not ask any member of the Democratic caucus to support our position on the budget. They voted that way clearly because they felt that was the best solution to address our concerns. So there was no arm twisting, as far as that goes. On the other hand, I think the house, well I know the house had spent a lot of effort and time in meetings with individual members of the house to really get them to fall in line as far as their voting on the budget, because I've had several members of the house, Democrats, say well we like the senate version, hold tough, but we can't vote for it. So, I think that's the difference. It's a lot easier for, it was easier for me, there was no pressure on (*unintelligible phrase*), there's no pressure on Senator Bennett as far as trying to make sure we had the vote, because it was built from the bottom up. So that made it, you know, a lot easier for us.

As far as constituent work, clearly having served in the house and in the senate it's, with the senate the districts are much larger, they have about thirty-five thousand constituents versus eight thousand five hundred, so it's much larger. And there's a lot of, a lot more work in the senate district as far as constituent work versus a house district. And I think that the other difference is, you don't get to spend as much time as you'd like to on individual cases, you know, when you're in senate versus the house, because you have so many cases that you have to deal with that you just don't have the time to do all that. So I think that's the other difference.

And the other thing I've also found out, particularly during campaign time, is in the house district you practically can go, you can go to every door campaigning, door-to-door, whereas a senate district, particularly when you're located in the rural area like my senate district for instance, the district is so large that it's practically impossible to go door-to-door to every house that there is, so we have to rely on different ways of communications whether it's, you know, mailing, radio, or what have you, to try to get out there to meet as many people as possible.

And I think the other thing that definitely does make a difference is who the senate has for house members within their senate district. Clearly, if you have good house members in your senate district, that definitely will help ease the workload for the senators, because if they do a real good job, then they wouldn't need to call the senator as well. And one thing that I find actually a lot of people do do is actually they'll call both, you know, at the same time, they'll call their house member and the senate member on the same problem. So that's one thing I try to work with, with the house members is, if someone's calling me about an unemployment issue, rather than have me work on it and have someone else work on it, you know, in different paths, is try to work on it together and try to avoid that duplication of work.

JR: Great. This question is, you know, mainly with your involvement with the Appropriations Committee, do you have a sense that, and this may play on your involvement with the NCSL and

other regional, like the Council of State Governments Eastern Regional Conference, do you have a sense of how Muskie's, Ed Muskie's influence in the budget committee in the U.S. Senate has affected state legislatures, like specifically Maine's and the way that they began to handle their budgets?

MM: To be honest with you, no. Clearly, at the time when Ed Muskie was around in the senate, when did he leave the senate, do you remember?

JR: He left the senate in 1980 to serve eight months as Carter's Secretary of State, so it's like '58 to '80 that he was there in the senate.

MM: Okay, so he left primarily after I came in.

JR: Right, right.

MM: Yeah. No, one of the, clearly when I first got elected back in 1980, at that point in time I really never paid too much attention as far as the, how important a role the federal government can play at the state level. And actually I knew that they played a role, but clearly they can have a big difference. And I found out more so since I was on the Appropriation Committee because a lot of the things that the federal government will do, or regulations that the federal government has, will have a big effect at the state level, and ultimately at the local level. And a good example of that is, if the federal government were to pay for forty percent for special education that they said they'd pay for years ago, that would mean that the state of Maine would get an additional sixty-eight million dollars a year, which is substantial, you know, at the state level.

The other issue is when you look at how the federal government reimburses states as far as Medicaid, Medicare; that also has a real big effect. Clearly that distribution formula Maine, it used to be last but I think it's fourth from the bottom or fifth from the bottom now as far as that reimbursement, does have a big effect because what that does, if you look at a lot of the rural hospitals in the state of Maine who might have a huge percentage of their clients who are Medicaid recipients, clearly what that will do is, and if they don't get reimbursement that they need for that, is it will force the hospital either to increase their rates, which means that if you have a private payer, their insurance company clearly will have to pay more and that'll have an effect, or the other option for a hospital is to start cutting services, and that will get into the whole access issue dealing with you know rural hospitals. And I know that was an issue five years ago when the Governor King's original budget came out, he actually had a cut in reimbursement to hospitals. It would have, if implemented, had a devastating effect to a lot of the rural hospitals in the state. It also affects, you know, like Eastern Maine or some of the other hospitals, but it would definitely have a bigger effect on the rural hospitals.

JR: What can you tell me about your appointment to the Productivity Realization Task Force?**MM:** It was an experience. Clearly one of the, actually a lot of my friends recommended that I not request that appointment, clearly because, you know, I have a good working relationship with the unions and, both state employees and the AFL-CIO, and that task force was designed to cut forty-five million dollars out of state government, which would have a devastating effect on state employees. And so a lot of people encouraged me not to do, but I did

anyway. And, I mean, it was a good experience; it really gave me a chance to look at the state budgeting process in a different way. But it also was helpful to learn a lot from individuals who was on the task force from the private sector and the way they thought state government should run. But at the same time I think that they also learned a lot about state government, and it's not as easy as, or as black and white as they might see.

I did spend a lot of time on Productivity Task Force because just the very nature of how they had set that task force up, and how they were supposed to operate. Clearly I was opposed to it right from the beginning, in that they were not going to allow anyone to table anything to get more information, they were not going to allow any public input. It was primarily, "Here's what it is, do you accept it or reject it?" And I think we were able to make some changes in that the first two departments that we were involved in, one was the department administration and financial affairs, which I really didn't know that much about, and actually I remember at that time Gail Chase was on the committee, we moved to try to table things, we were outvoted, and things were going along pretty smoothly on that.

The second department actually that we had dealt with was the Department of Conservation, and clearly I knew about that very well because of my years being chair of the Energy and Natural Resource Committee. And one of the things that I asked at that time the chair of the task force if I can at least have, you know, the information ahead of time so that we, they originally weren't going to present until the committee meeting, here it is, you vote on it. So he did allow me to actually see the stuff ahead of time so I was able to prepare, and actually the proposals that they brought forth within that particular department, I was able to, through my years working in the legislature on that committee, we were able to get actually some documents from staff, not necessarily from the hierarchy because clearly they're the ones that were bringing the proposal forward, to show that actually that their actual proposal was going to cost money and not save money.

And another area actually when it came to the Bureau of Forestry when they thought that they were going to save a couple of million, I can't remember, too involved, but save a couple of million dollars, actually it wasn't a couple, even though it shows on paper a couple million dollars, actually it was going to be about a million dollars, because under that particular program the forest fire suppression tax actually pays for half of it, so clearly if you cut the program back, you're also cutting the revenue stream out.

The other thing actually I was able to show the commission within that same bureau is actually the cuts that they were going to actually make was actually going to have a devastating effect. Because the effect that they were going to have is, I was able to get the response time it would take forest fires personnel to respond to a fire actually would double the size plus of acreage burned. So I was able to show that it really would have a devastating effect in as far as forest fire response time, and actually the dollar figure that they said that they're going to save, they actually never would realize that they would save. So actually that was a turning point when the commission was, actually did decide to make some different changes.

However, it wasn't until we got to the Department of Correction when we, they actually finally decided to make some change as far as allowing public input. I remember that particular

department we were dealing with, actually we had it in Room 113 in the State office building, which is the largest room that there was, and at that time Commissioner Lehman brought in this proposal of what he would do with his particular department. Employees wanted to speak, and were told they were not allowed to speak, even though it was on their time off, because that wasn't the way the process was set up. So after we got done hearing it, I made an announcement at that hearing that I'd be willing to stay there all day, by myself if I had to, to listen to the employees and what they had to say. And actually I think Representative Chase stayed, and actually that was the turning point when we did allow some public participation to proceed. And ironically, we were able to actually make some changes within what was originally brought forward in the Department of Corrections, however didn't have the votes to change a lot of it.

But when I was put as chair of the following session of the Appropriation Committee and when Commissioner Lehman left the state and Commissioner Magnuson became commissioner, then they came back to restore a lot of the cuts that was in the budget. Ironically, the arguments that the commissioner, the new commissioner used to restore them were the same arguments that myself and Ted Blessner, who was from the courts, used during the (*unintelligible word*) Productivity Task Force of why we should not be cutting, you know, those programs and what effect it would have. So, to that aspect it made me feel pretty good that we were able to say, well, you know, we weren't off base as far as what our original thinking were. But it was a good process; it really gave me a insight of different ways that the private sector management people thought, and actually they did have a lot of good ideas that we did accept as well.

JR: Okay, great. How would you, or how is, did your relationship with the unions change over the years? Like in your time in the legislature, like you said you had a good relationship with the AFL-CIO. What can you tell me about how unions in Maine have evolved over like the past two decades, and your involvement with them?

MM: I think the, I've always had a real good working relationship with the unions, being a union member myself. I think clearly the, you know, the size of the membership has gone down primarily, and I think that has to do, you know, with the cutbacks, particularly in the paper industry, forest practices, forest products industry. But unions have always had a good purpose of not only fighting for its membership, but also for issues that do not relate to their membership. For instance, the minimum wage. I know that has always been an issue that unions have always fought for over the years, as far as increasing minimum wage, which their mem-, more than likely I think practically all the membership makes more than minimum wage anyway. So I think their involvement has been extremely vital in that it does give the legislature a chance to listen to what a lot of the workingmen and women of the state feel.

It also, you know, I mean unions I think sometimes, one of the things I hear from the rank and file, sometimes they feel that they might have gotten off a little bit more on the social side versus actual working areas, but, by and large I think the unions have played a very important role in the state of Maine. And naturally when you look at the company, actually I work for, Great Northern Paper Company, actually they, Great Northern, recently became, or moved into the Katahdin region, they actually encouraged the members to form a union. Yeah. And the primary reason is that it would be a lot easier for them to actually go to a union president or different union presidents saying, well, you know, “Why don't we do it this way?” Or, “This is what your

benefit package is going to be," versus having to deal with each individual employee separately.

But I think over the years, though, the unions have become more active in, and actually have been advocates to some degree for companies, or for their employers. A good example is, I'll use Great Northern Paper Company for an example, is when the company was trying to build the Big A dam, the unions were right there, were right behind the company supporting, you know, the application to build a dam up in that region of the state, and were, you know, it came to Augusta and at several meetings, you know, whether it was for the LURC or DEP, trying to promote that dam being built. And it wasn't only the dam, I mean clearly they have, there have been other issues in the past where there might have been legislation in, whether it was environmental legislation or, well, primarily it would be environmental legislation, that would have a devastating effect on a company.

Another good example is when the federal government was looking at changing the definition for recyclable content for sawdust. Clearly the unions, the local unions at that level, plus the AFL-CIO also was very supportive of leaving the definition as it was, and were able to convince, you know, George Mitchell and other in the federal agencies that it would have a devastating effect. So, the unions have I think gone, and while they still promote, you know, the working person's issues, they've also taken on some role as far as helping out the company or the employers that they represent, as far as promoting that particular industry.

JR: Great. What sense do you have of how like the paper industry has changed in Maine, like from, I'd say probably from your first involvement with it, with the Great Northern Paper Company from '73 to now, like how has it changed, what are the factors? I imagine environmental, but what are the other factors that are changing the industry, and how is it changing?

MM: I think it's changing in that the industry, and of itself the technology, clearly within the industry is changing; it's become more computerized. And that's having a, well it's a double-edged sword because clearly they have to modernize if they want to stay competitive with the industry, you know, not only within the United States but worldwide. Clearly, you know, it's a worldwide competition, with air, freight, boat, you know, get your product overseas a lot quicker and in a faster amount of time. So clearly, I think, by it modernizing to become more competitive, which will definitely strengthen the company to compete later on down the road, the downside of that is, is usually with modernization comes job losses. And, I've seen it within the company I work for, clearly the department I work for. We actually are producing more tonnage, pushing more paper out the door, with less than half the employees that we used to have years ago. But if we did not do it, clearly, you know, the down side is the company probably wouldn't be there today, it would be shut down. So I think that technology has made a big difference in how companies operate.

Also the, when you look at some companies like International Paper, for instance, you look at the mills that they currently have within the state of Maine, clearly they can shut them all down if they want to without having much effect on their bottom line. And that's, you know, the sad part about these huge international type companies, is they can make decisions that to them won't affect much, but when you look at what effect it will have on the individual and their families,

and the community, it would have a devastating effect. I've seen it at the company I work for. Bowater started to sell off their holdings in Maine. They sold the paper and lumber company to Irving, plus millions of acres of land to Irving, they were looking at splitting off the Millinocket mill and the East Millinocket mill, which would actually have devastated the Millinocket mill since East Millinocket, at the time they were looking at selling it, was in better shape than the Millinocket mill.

So clearly corporations can make decisions that would have a devastating effect at the local level. Look at what IP had done in Passadumkeag and Costigan just recently. They've shut down, you know, those operations. Not necessarily because they are not producing a product that actually they can make money, because clearly they can. The reason that I heard that they were shutting down is they're not getting enough for their product elsewhere. So clearly, you know, the unfortunate side is no real community connection between a lot of these corporations and the mill in the local level.

JR: All right. One kind of, sort of a general question having to do with the University of Maine system and, how, what are your impressions, I guess, of the influence of like University of Maine and having so many various campuses across the state? I guess you probably think about, if you have like a sense of how it compares to other states, but also do you just how, what your sense of it being in these various places, what it does for the state of Maine, and I guess for the university itself?

MM: Yeah. I think the university and the technical colleges, by having, you know, the different campuses around the state, I think it definitely does have a positive impact, particularly for those communities as far as having some real community type connection. For instance, University of Maine at Fort Kent, I know years ago there has been legislation introduced to close down the university, saying it has the lowest enrollment from a system wide perspective, which at that time was true but now actually they've, it's not, no longer the lowest, they've really increased their enrollment, it definitely does have a important effect not only for the community and the jobs that it provides within the communities, but also for the people in the state of Maine, the citizens. Clearly when you look at the economy and the way it is now, if someone were to travel from, say if they had done away with the University of Maine at Fort Kent, then clearly they have to either go to Presque Isle or all the way down to Orono. And that does have a big effect.

If you look at what's happening in today's economy in the diversity and the changes that happens all the time, you have a lot of nontraditional students who go to the university and the technical college system. And if those nontraditional students have to travel an hour away or an hour and a half away to further their education, clearly they would not be doing that. And it does make a big effect, particularly if you have a student who knows that, or a worker who knows that they're going to get laid off because the machine that they've been working on, or the company they're working on will be closing down within six months or what have you, if they have- knowing that far in advance, and they want to further their education, clearly it's much more difficult if they have a family and they have to travel a greater distance.

And I'll give you a good example, is back in the early '85 when Great Northern first announced

that they were going to cut back about twelve hundred employees from that operation, we got together a group from al three towns up in that area, and actually we applied for a economic development grant from EDA, and part of that component was actually to establish an educational center in the Katahdin region. Which, at that time, some people thought it was a waste of money, that they really didn't need it, but actually, if you look at today, the number of students within that particular region that actually go to the Katahdin area training center, it's a huge amount. As a matter of fact, the facility is under construction today, which will over double the size of that facility. The capacity and the use of that facility has been -

End of Side B, Tape One
Side A, Tape Two

MM: . . . been a real strong advocate for these centers, and when I was chair of Appropriation we put one into the budget for two million dollars for the Houlton center, which is under construction now and actually next month hopefully they'll have their open house on that facility. And they actually are able to do it with working with the private sector who donated the building. And one of the things that I've always maintained is, even though I support these centers in rural areas, I think they ought to be done in coordination with other higher Ed facilities. And that was one of the requirements. For instance, that facility in Houlton is going to be dealt with, with not only the university in Presque Isle, but also the Northern Maine Technical College, the Adult Ed people up in Houlton are also a part of that facility. So the coordination of all higher Ed, working together to provide an educational opportunity for that particular region of the state. Likewise, actually in this budget we're giving some additional money for the K Tech facility so that they can over double the size of that facility. We put in the same time as we did the Houlton center money for Piscataquis County. Piscataquis County was the only county in the state that did not have any presence of any higher Ed facility at all. So we were able to work with the municipality over there, and actually there's a building, that the university system, the technical college system, are working together with the hospital as well to have a higher ed facility there in Dover-Foxcroft.

Which makes it a lot easier for people and students to go to these facilities to further their education, and that's one thing that we found that's been extremely helpful for individuals. A good example is, I had a classmate of mine who actually got laid off at the mill, but before he actually got laid off he was taking courses at K Tech, which makes it a lot easier, he had a family, two children, and we were able to, you know, just go down the road, you know, do his classes, come back. And so, it makes it the convenience for individuals to further their education is dramatically improved by having these centers throughout the state. And I think it's really important. I don't think just because you live in a rural area that you should be penalized and not have the same opportunity as someone who might live next to one of these facilities.

And the other thing, I think that definitely will help out in these facilities, I know we had it at K Tech and I think the other ones will, if they don't have it will eventually have it, is being hooked up into the ITV system, so that way there, if there has to be, or if a student is taking a course that might not be feasible just for that one area, clearly they can go to that facility and, if it's hooked into the ITV system, then you're able to take whatever courses that might be offered down in South Portland. But not only for education purposes, I think it's good actually for businesses so

that if a business has to meet with the Department of Environmental Protection or some other agencies, that they can't take the time to drive from Fort Kent all the way down to Augusta or Portland, which, you know, takes more than four, five, five hours driving one way, clearly that takes a lot of someone's time, so clearly these facilities are very important, not only for the educational needs but also for to enhance economic development. And one of the things I learned a few years ago meeting with CEOs from companies from around the country and site selectors from around the country that had come to Maine to look at Maine as a place of doing businesses, that clearly there are a couple of things that they want, is they want an educated workforce, and if they're not educated at least to have the ability to educate the workforce. So clearly these facilities and the centers are key components that I think will be very vital for rural areas as far as providing that educational opportunity for economic development. And that's one of the things I've heard talking with these business people, that they're really impressed with.

JR: How does the gap between northern and southern Maine kind of manifest itself through the university system, if at all? If like, if you have a sense, because I know I've definitely heard of some political infighting I think specifically between USM and the University of Maine in Orono, but what sense do you have of that in relation to what you were talking about, and also with kind of the legislative area, you can get a fair amount.

MM: You mean as far as is there a gap or is there a friction between -?

JR: Yeah, yeah.

MM: Yeah, well, I think clearly there probably has been a friction between different universities in the system, and- you know, whether it's Orono versus USM- but I don't think that friction is as great today as it has been in the past. And I think a lot of that has to do with the chancellor. I know Chancellor McTaggart, my understanding is he's stepping down, but I know Chancellor McTaggart has done a real good job in making sure that the system is operated in a manner that takes care of the needs of all the facilities throughout the system. And I think that's important because I don't think that we can afford to have infighting amongst different facilities throughout the system, or between facilities, whether it's the TCs versus the university system. And the other thing I think we got to be careful of in the legislature is clearly, I don't think we ought to be popping up all kinds of facilities all over, because clearly there is a point where, you know, it could become too much and we're not providing the service to the people of the state of Maine at a good economical price, so I think we got to be careful of that as well.

JR: Okay, thank you. All right, just to kind of change gears, kind of wind down, we've been here a while. Focusing on Ed Muskie, did you have any personal contact with him, I'd say either in your, with your time with the unions at Great Northern, or probably the early part of your term in the legislature I imagine. He was out of the senate by then, but did you have any personal contact with him? I mean-

MM: To, yes, to some degree. That was usually when he would speak at the Democratic convention or at some other function that he might have been the speaker at that event. I do remember going to, a convention mentioned when he was a speaker he did like to talk quite a bit. But I've always enjoyed listening to Ed speak because he had a I think a wealth of knowledge in

his head, and clearly a lot of experience. I remember once asking him, this is a long time ago, about how he managed to, you know, stay in so long. He responded something to the effect that you got to, and how did he manage to please everyone- and he said, you know, clearly you can't please everyone but as long as you can please, you know, the majority of the people the majority of the time then you're all set. But yeah, I mean Ed, like I said, I never had really that much interaction with him other than to I might talk to him briefly here and there when I saw him at the Democratic convention or at the Muskie lobster bake. A lot of the stories I've heard about Ed were from individuals such as John Martin who used to work for Ed Muskie, or Don Nicoll who used to work for Ed, I've heard a lot of stories from them. As well as Pat (*name*) who was a real good friend of Ed's. And, so that was pretty much my interaction with Senator Muskie.

JR: What sense did you have of first his influence on the Democratic party in Maine, and, if at all specifically, on your part of Maine, the northern Penobscot county?

MM: I think he had a lot of influence as far as the Democratic Party in the state of Maine. Clearly Ed, I think, was the turning point in Maine politics as far as Democrats when he became governor. I think Ed had a lot of influence because Ed was, you know, an individual who was a caring individual, who cared about people but he also cared about the environment in which people lived in, and he wasn't afraid to say what's on his mind. And I think he really brought the party forward, but he did it in a way that wasn't, I think, harmful to the party. I mean, you know, Ed was a statesman, he was a statesman, and I think that's definitely what has helped the Democratic party in the state of Maine, and the state of Maine as a whole, as far as how we're viewed across the country in the type of people that we elect. We elect Ed Muskie, George Mitchell, Bill Cohen. You know, they're people who have a lot of integrity, are statesman-like people.

JR: This may be kind of leaning towards but, what you've heard of Muskie from John Martin or Don Nicoll, but did you have a sense of his strengths and weaknesses as a statesman?

MM: I think- Other than I guess he had a temper. I've heard that he definitely did have a temper. Whether it was, you know, something that he might have done himself but wasn't pleased with the way things come out, I heard he definitely did have a temper. But I think he was able to, at least from what I've seen of him, he was able to confine that to those particular situations and, to the best of my knowledge never, you know, I've never seen Ed lose his temper in public. So I think you're able to hold that to those areas of, you know, behind closed doors or what have you. But I'm sure John and Don will know better than I if that's truly the case.

JR: Right, right. Now I'd just kind of like your, sort of your general impressions. I'd say, just, like if you just speak to what your general impressions are of Maine and Maine politics, and really whatever sense you have of Maine in relationship with the rest of the country, how that's changed since like 1980s, or even before that really, just how, what direction has Maine gone in and what direction is it going in, in your time.

MM: I don't think that Maine politics has really changed, you know, that much. I think if you look at Maine politics I think, particularly people that we by and large elect to a higher office, are individuals that, even though they're from one party or another party, I think they're

individuals who deal with issues on its merits. And I think that's really important, I think that's what has given us a lot of name recognition throughout the country. And are able to articulate the concerns we have, whether it's Bill Cohen during the whole Watergate issue, or George Mitchell during the Oliver North hearings, Margaret Chase Smith during her speech on McCarthy. I think, you know, Maine and particularly the people, a lot of the people we elect to Washington, have a, are perceived as real statesman-like type individuals that really look at the issues.

If you look at Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, you know, they're viewed as moderate Republicans from around the country. So I think that's the, you know, good thing about Maine, is we've had a lot of people in Washington, and actually moved up further on, whether it's Muskie, you know, Secretary of State, or George Mitchell and all the stuff that he was able to do, particularly in Ireland and what have you. So I think that fares well for, for the state of Maine.

JR: What sense do you have of how specifically Maine, like the surges of independents, you know, people not adhering to either political party? How is that generally (*unintelligible word*) manifest itself in the Maine legislature, and actually now in the U.S. legislature? But how do you think that is affecting Maine, the Maine legislature, and how will you think it will in the future?

MM: I think if you look at, yeah, clearly when you look at, particularly this session, there probably were times when the Republicans or the Democrats in the senate could have said, no, we're going to stick with this, this is going to be the party line, and try to embarrass the other party. But I think what Maine people want is a government that works, where they can get things done in the best interests of the state. And I don't think that the Republican Party or the Democratic Party has all the right answers. I think that there are people in both parties who have great ideas, who can work on solutions to benefit the public as a whole. You know, clearly when, I know that members of my own, or the Republican Party have tried to get me to switch over to Republican, and there are members of the Republican Party who try to get me to switch over to the Democrats, but I don't think it's any one issue that makes a party. I think it's a combination, or (*unintelligible word*), I think it's a combination of a lot of different things.

And particularly what has happened this year with the seventeen-seventeen tie, I don't think it was because the public said we want it even, because clearly, I mean, there's no way of them knowing. I think it's just the type of individuals that was elected throughout the state, it just so happened that it ended up to be a seventeen-seventeen, not necessarily that the public wanted it that way. But I think what the public does want is they want the government, whether it's at the state level or federal level, to work and to work in a manner that we can get things done. And, I think they're tired of this partisan bickering that clearly, the press sometimes I think likes to see more of that because it makes good print. I think some of your real party activists like to see that to try to beat up on one party or the other party. But as a whole I think the state of Maine wants their government to work.

JR: Great. Okay, I'm pretty much done. I think the only further thing I would ask, specifically this summer we've been trying to get more people interviewed who have a sense of like the labor movement in Maine, so I'm wondering if you know of any people who might be useful to interview, specifically with your involvement with labor unions. I think particularly those who

have been around for a while, who would know perhaps back maybe as early as the forties or fifties and into the sixties. Can you think of anyone who we might be able to contact?

MM: My uncle would be a good one, he passed away but he would have been a good one, he'd have kept you here probably for half a day. He liked to talk, and particularly about unions, and he kept everything, everything from day one. You know, because he'd give me books back, Great Northern contracts back in the early nineteen hundreds that he kept, so he clearly would have been a good one. But, let's see, you want someone probably down in this area?

JR: Yeah, but even up towards Millinocket, if you know anyone, if you can think of anyone off the top of your head, (*unintelligible phrase*).

MM: Okay, and you'd just want someone that would have knowledge way back to the early forties?

JR: That, not specifically, but yeah, that would be definitely something to add to it. Like specifically union involvement, like around when Muskie was, you know, emerging on the political scene, something of that nature, that would be gold, but -

MM: Actually Thurmond Millett might be one. I'm not sure where he lives now or how to get a hold of him, but why don't I try to get that and get back in touch with you on it.

JR: Okay, and how do spell the last name?

MM: M-I-L-L-E-T-T. You want a union person in the forties that -

JR: Forties, fifties, yeah, definitely, who would have a sense of -

MM: And maybe their involvement with Muskie, or-?

JR: Yeah, like their sense of labor dynamics, but also their sense of political involvement, probably with the Democratic Party but also to do with some Republicans.

MM: Yeah, okay. Actually, my uncle would be ideal if he was still alive because he clearly would fit the union aspect of it. And he was a Republican, but still was involved with (*unintelligible phrase*).

JR: All right, and besides that, do you have anything else to add about Muskie, yourself, about Maine.

MM: I think you did an excellent job in thinking of your questions.

JR: All right, well then I think we're all set. Thank you very much.

MM: Well great, (*unintelligible word*). Well I'll get back in touch with you, I think Rosemary's probably got your number.

End of Interview